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Letter dated 3 March 1997 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward to you herewith the text of a statement issued on 28 February 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the statement as a document of the General Assembly, under item 71 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Movses ABELIAN
Chargé d'affaires

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ANNEX

Statement issued on 28 February 1997 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia

During the last week, Azerbaijan has been circulating statements with regard to so-called illegal transfer of arms to Armenia. In its statements, Azerbaijan relies exclusively on the unofficial information provided by Minister Aman Tuleyev of the Russian Federation. This information has not been confirmed by any of the interested parties. As is known, the State Duma of the Russian Federation has opened an investigation into the matter.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia regrets that Azerbaijan, once more, has succumbed to the temptation of exploiting any opportunity in pursuit of its political goals. The Ministry is concerned by the Azerbaijani attitude and is inclined to assess it as Azerbaijan's intention to deviate from negotiations and embark on the path of military adventurism.

The Ministry would like to note that, since the establishment of the ceasefire in the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan has been consistently violating the letter and the spirit of the ceasefire agreement, the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the decisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

During 1993-1995, Azerbaijan purchased from Ukraine 150 battle tanks in three shipments, and 10 combat aircraft. Azerbaijan has notified the member States of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe about these purchases through its notes dated 3 November 1993 and 12 December 1993 and two notes dated 26 April 1994.

In addition to the above-mentioned arm transfers, according to our information from reliable sources, during the same period Azerbaijan purchased 12 MiG 21, 4 SU-15 and 2 SU-25 combat aircraft, and 100 T-55 battle tanks, about which the Treaty community was not notified. In the spring of 1994, a large quantity of spare parts for T-62 battle tanks were transported to Azerbaijan on a special flight. In late 1995, Azerbaijan acquired, through the KOFISA firm, semi-active laser-guided GANKAB-500L air bombs and surface-to-air anti-radar Kh-25ML and Kh-29L missiles. In 1996, 2,600 BM-21 missiles were also shipped to Azerbaijan.

According to our information, Azerbaijan has already entered into an agreement to receive an additional 8 SU-24 combat aircraft, and 18 aircraft engines. Azerbaijan will also receive missiles for the Uragan missile launchers. A large number of foreign experts and technicians are involved in the operations of the Azerbaijani No. 102 tank and No. 307 helicopter engine factories. They also plan to start joint production of engines for surface-to-surface guided missiles, turbo jet engines for aircraft and OT-5600 and TIP-9600 radio stations.

Azerbaijan is also in serious non-compliance and violation of the provisions of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. According to

its notifications and annual exchange of military information as at 1 January 1997, Azerbaijan significantly exceeds its notified maximum levels for holdings in three categories of the equipment limited by the Treaty (battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles and artillery units). In the battle tank category, it holds 285 units against the 220 permitted; in the armoured combat vehicle category 785 against 220; and in artillery 336 units against 285.

Along with this, the destabilizing accumulation of forces by Azerbaijan in Nakhichevan is also of concern. In the armoured combat vehicle category alone, 428 out of its 785 units, plus the 107 vehicles at the disposal of Interior Ministry forces, are stationed on the territory of the Nakhichevan republic. This is despite the limit of 220 as the maximum level for armoured combat vehicle holdings for the entire Azerbaijani territory. There is additional destabilizing accumulation of forces along the contact line between Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan, particularly at two centres, Gianja and Kurdamir.

The exploitation of the unsubstantiated facts of Minister Tuleyev's statement by a country with these kinds of gross violation is a matter for serious concern.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia qualifies this most recent Azerbaijani move as a preparatory campaign to justify its plans for a military solution to the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.